

COOKING PAN PROTECTOR

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to a pan protector, and, in particular, the present invention relates to a pan protector and method of manufacture thereof that provides an easy, direct and effective way for protecting a frying or cooking pan from dirt or scratches or abrasions when, for example, pans are successively stacked upon one another for compact storage in a cupboard or elsewhere.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

It is known that the cooking surfaces of frying pans or other cooking pans can typically include non-stick coatings, such as TEFLON [™]. These non-stick coatings prevent food from sticking to the pans, but can be easily damaged when, for example, pans are successively stacked upon one another for compact storage, since the underside of a frying or cooking pan on top of another pan can scratch or abrade the non-stick coating of the frying or cooking pan positioned underneath. Repeated stacking causes the coatings to wear off, with the result that food tends to stick to these pans during cooking, thus defeating the original purpose of providing the pan with non-stick surfaces.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The object of the present invention is to provide a cooking pan protector which is simple and efficient, and which can be easily and securely placed to protect the cooking surfaces of

frying or cooking pans from dirt or scratches or abrasions, particularly when, for example, pans are successively stacked upon one another for compact storage in a cupboard or elsewhere.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a cooking pan protector having a pocket portion therein, wherein a frying or cooking pan can be completely inserted and sleeved therein so as to protect the frying or cooking pan when not in use, the pan being simply removable from the pocket of the cooking pan protector when later needed for cooking purposes.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide a pan protector formed of panels made of stretchable material, whereby the pocket formed when the panels are connected together can be stretched so as to accommodate varying sizes of cooking pans placed therein.

Accordingly, one aspect of the present invention provides for a cooking pan protector formed from textile sheet material comprising opposed front and rear panels, each of the panels being defined by an edge portion, the front and rear panels being connected along a substantial length of the edge portion of each panel by a stitched seam to form a pocket therein; a pan receiving opening in the rear panel for insertion and removal of a cooking pan in the pocket; and a handle receiving opening at an end of the pocket, whereby a handle of the cooking pan is inserted therethrough, and whereby, once the handle of the cooking pan has been substantially inserted through the handle receiving opening, the cooking pan is then inserted into the pocket through the pan receiving opening so as to completely cover the cooking pan.

Another aspect of the present invention provides for a pan protector formed from textile

sheet material comprising a front panel, the front panel being defined by a first edge portion; a rear panel defined by a second edge portion, the rear panel further comprising opposed first and second overlapping plies of fabric; wherein the front and the rear panel each have an outer layer and an inner layer and are connected together along a substantial length of the first and second edge portions by a continuous stitch seam to form a pocket therebetween, the pocket being adapted to accommodate a pan; a pan receiving opening in the rear panel for insertion and removal of a pan in the pocket, the pan receiving opening being positioned where the first and second plies of fabric overlap; and a handle receiving opening at an end of the pocket, whereby a handle of the pan is inserted therethrough, and whereby, once the handle of the cooking pan has been substantially inserted through the handle receiving opening, the cooking pan is then inserted into the pocket through the pan receiving opening so as to completely cover the cooking pan.

According to a still further aspect of the present invention, there is provided a pan protector formed from textile sheet material comprising a front panel, the front panel being defined by a first edge portion; a rear panel defined by a second edge portion, the rear panel further comprising opposed first and second overlapping plies of fabric; wherein the front and the rear panel each have an outer layer and an inner layer and are connected together along a substantial length of the first and second edge portions by a stitch seam to form a pocket therebetween, the front and rear panels being made of stretchable material, whereby the pocket formed when the panels are connected together can be stretched so as to accommodate varying sizes of pans placed therein; a transverse pan receiving opening in the rear panel for insertion and removal of a pan in the pocket, the pan receiving opening being positioned where the first

and second plies of fabric overlap; and a handle receiving opening at an end of the pocket, whereby a handle of the pan is inserted therethrough, and whereby, once the handle of the pan has been substantially inserted through the handle receiving opening, a first end of the pan may then be inserted into a first end of the pocket through the pan receiving opening, and an opposed second end of the pan is then inserted into a second opposed end of the pocket, whereby the first ply of the overlapped fabric is then everted over the second ply of fabric to cover the pan receiving opening to the pocket, so as to completely cover and protect the pan placed therein.

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of making a pan protector to protect a cooking pan placed therein, the pan protector being formed from opposed front and rear panels of textile sheet material, comprising the steps of connecting together the front and rear panels of the textile material along a substantial length of edge portions of the front and rear panels with a stitched seam to form a pocket therebetween; providing a pan receiving opening in the formed pocket for insertion and removal of a cooking pan in the pocket; and providing a handle receiving opening at an end of the pocket, whereby a handle of the pan can be inserted therethrough, and whereby, once the handle of the pan has been substantially inserted through the handle receiving opening, the pan can then be inserted into the pocket through the pan receiving opening so as to completely cover and protect the pan placed therein.

According to yet another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of making a pan protector to protect a cooking pan placed therein, comprising the steps of providing opposed front and rear panels of a stretchable textile material; connecting together the front and

rear panels of the stretchable textile material along a substantial length of edge portions of the front and rear panels with a stitched seam to form a pocket therebetween; modifying the rear panel to comprise opposed first and second overlapping plies of fabric, the overlapped first and second plies of fabric defining a pan receiving opening in the formed pocket for insertion and removal of a pan therein; providing a handle receiving opening at an end of the pocket, whereby a handle of the pan can be substantially inserted therethrough, inserting the handle of the pan through the handle receiving opening; inserting a first end of the pan into a first end of the pocket through the pan receiving opening; inserting a second end of the cooking pan into a second opposed end of the pocket; and everting the first ply of the overlapped fabric over the second ply of fabric to cover the pan receiving opening to the pocket, so as to completely cover and protect the pan placed therein.

The advantage of the present invention is that it provides a pan protector which is simple and efficient, and which can be easily and securely placed to protect the cooking surfaces of frying or cooking pans from dirt or scratches or abrasions, particularly when, for example, pans are successively stacked upon one another for compact storage in a cupboard or elsewhere.

It is a further advantage of the present invention to provide a pan protector having a pocket portion therein, wherein a frying or cooking pan can be completely inserted and sleeved therein so as to protect the complete body of the frying or cooking pan when not in use, the pan being simply removable from the pocket of the cooking pan protector when later needed for cooking or other purposes.

It is a still further advantage of the present invention to provide a cooking pan protector formed of panels made of stretchable material, whereby the pocket formed when the panels are connected together can be stretched so as to accommodate varying sizes of cooking pans placed therein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A preferred embodiment of the present invention is described below with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a top perspective view of an embodiment of the pan protector of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a bottom view of an embodiment of the pan protector illustrated in Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a top perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention, which illustrates the handle receiving opening at an end of the pan protector; and

Figure 4 is a top perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention, which illustrates the pan protector in use securing a cooking pan placed therein, and which illustrates the handle receiving opening at an end of the pan protector, with the handle of the cooking pan inserted therethrough being shown in broken lines.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference to Figure 1, in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the cooking pan protector (generally designated by reference numeral 1) of the present invention is formed from textile sheet material having an opposed front panel 3 and rear panel 5 connected to each other. The cooking pan protector 1 thus formed can have a substantially flat shape, or other geometric shapes with, for example, artistic designs thereon. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the front panel 3 and rear panel 5 are made to be of substantially the same shape.

The panels 3, 5 of the cooking pan protector 1 are each defined by edge portions 7, which are then connected together. Essentially then, the edge portions 7 determine the shape of the panels 3, 5. The panels 3, 5 can thus be made in various shapes, such as semi-circular, rectangular, oval or, in the preferred embodiment, a circular shape, so as to correspond with the circular, or other, shape of a frying or cooking pan to be placed within the cooking pan protector 1. It will, of course, also be understood by persons skilled in the art that the shape of the cooking pan protector 1 will be determined by, and correspond to, the shape of the cooking or frying pan to be placed and inserted therein.

As noted above, the front panel 3 and rear panel 5 are connected to one another at least along the edge portions 7 of each panel 3, 5 by conventional means such as sewing (in a preferred embodiment) or, in an alternative embodiment, adhesion or velcro TM strips. It is preferred that the front panel 3 and rear panel 5 are fixedly connected to each other along at least

a substantial length of the edge portions by way of, for example, a stitch seam. In connecting the front panel 3 and rear panel 5 together in this fashion (through the connection of the edge portions 7 of each panel 3, 5) a pocket portion 9 is thereby defined therebetween.

The pocket portion 9 is adapted to receive and accommodate a frying or cooking pan placed therein, and is preferably sized so as to be substantially the same as the frying or cooking pan to be placed therein. In addition, to allow access to the interior pocket portion 9 formed as a result of the connection of the front panel 3 and rear panel 5, the pocket portion 9 has an opening 11 thereto, which is defined on an outer surface of the pocket portion 9. The opening 11 is adapted to receive the frying or cooking pan to be placed in the pocket portion 9. In the preferred embodiment, an underside of the front panel 3 (when connected to the rear panel 5 so as to form the pocket portion 9 therebetween) will be positioned on top of, or in close proximity to, the upper surface of the pan placed within the pocket portion 9, while an upper surface of the rear panel is positioned near or in contact with an underside of the frying or cooking pan placed within the pocket portion 9. While it is understood that the opening 11 could be placed on either the front panel 3 or rear panel 5 defining the pocket portion 9 therebetween (and which form the top or bottom of the pocket portion 9 of the pan protector 1 of the present invention, respectively), in the preferred embodiment the opening 11 is positioned on the rear panel 5 which forms the bottom of the pocket portion 9. In the preferred embodiment, the rear panel 5 is provided with a transverse opening 11 for the insertion and removal of a frying or cooking pan placed within the pocket portion 9. The opening 11 of the pocket portion 9 is so dimensioned that the frying or cooking pan can be easily sleeved into and removed from the pocket portion 9.

In the preferred embodiment, the rear panel 5 which forms the pocket portion 9 is comprised of two overlapping plies of backing fabric 13, 15, which are each connected to the front panel 3 (or the front face fabric of the pan protector). With reference to Figure 2, it can be seen that the area where the two plies of backing fabric 13, 15 overlap define the opening 11 to the interior pocket portion 9. In fashioning the two overlapping plies 13, 15 of fabric in this manner to form the rear panel 5, a frying or cooking pan can be inserted or removed from the opening 11, and, because the plies of fabric 13, 15 overlap, the pan, when positioned and placed within the pocket portion 9, remains secured and completely covered within the pocket portion 9. Alternatively, the rear panel 5 could comprise a non-overlapping single piece of textile material (which is then connected to the front panel 3) having an opening defined therein.

In a preferred embodiment, the cooking pan protector of the present invention is made of a stretchable material, whereby, when a frying or cooking pan is placed within the pocket portion 9, the material is able to stretch so as to accommodate varying sizes of pans which are to be placed therein.

As noted previously, the stitched seam joining the front 3 and rear 5 panels together can be effected along a substantial length of the edge portions 7 thereof. However, in a preferred embodiment, a small area at an end of the pocket 9 is left unsealed, as can be seen with reference to Figure 3, so as to provide a handle receiving opening 17 at an end of the pocket 9, whereby, to accommodate a frying or cooking pan being placed in the pocket portion 9, a handle of the frying or cooking pan can be inserted therethrough. Alternatively, the front 3 and rear 5 panels may be sealed together with a continuous stitch around a full length of the edge portions 7, the handle

receiving opening instead being cut and defined in an area on either the front or rear panels. As noted, the handle receiving opening 17 is provided at one end of the cooking pan protector 1 of the present invention. In this manner, when the frying or cooking pan is to be inserted into the pocket portion 9, the handle of the cooking or frying pan is inserted firstly into the pocket portion 9, whereby a handle of the cooking pan is inserted through the handle receiving opening 17, and the remainder of the frying or cooking pan (or, the body of the pan, containing the cooking surface) can then be accommodated and inserted into the pocket portion 9. Once the handle of the cooking pan has been inserted through the handle receiving opening 17, in placing a cooking pan in the pocket portion 9 in the preferred embodiment, the first ply of fabric 13 is pulled back slightly to reveal the opening 11 to the interior of the pocket portion 9, and a first end of a cooking pan is then inserted into one end of the pocket. Once the first end of the frying or cooking pan is in place, the second ply of fabric 15 is then pulled back, and a second end of the frying or cooking pan is inserted into a second end of the pocket. The first ply of the overlapped fabric 13 is then everted over the second ply of fabric 15 to cover the pan receiving opening 11 to the pocket 9, so as to completely cover and protect the cooking pan placed therein. And, because the plies of fabric 13, 15 overlap, the cooking pan remains secured and covered within the pocket portion 9. Further, and with reference to Figure 4, due to the pliability and resiliency of the stretchable material of which the cooking pan protector of the present invention is comprised, in the preferred embodiment, once the frying or cooking pan is entirely in place within the pocket 9, the material will contract around the frying or cooking pan, thus providing a secure protective cover to enclose the frying or cooking pan.

The cooking pan protector 1 of the present invention can be made of various textile

materials, such as, for example, heat resistant, fire proof, and fire resistant materials, if desired. The panels of the cooking pan protector can, preferably, be made of cotton, polyester, wool or a polyester blend or other textile materials, whereby the cooking pan protector of the present invention can be easily washed.

In forming the cooking pan protector of the present invention, the pan protector is formed from opposed front and rear panels of textile sheet material which are connected together along edge portions of the panels with a stitched seam to form a pocket therebetween. The stitched seam joining the front 3 and rear 5 panels together can be effected along a substantial length of the edge portions 7 thereof, and, in the preferred embodiment, a small area at an end of the pocket 9 is left unsealed, so as to provide a handle receiving opening 17 at an end of the pocket 9, as can be seen with reference to Figure 3, whereby, to accommodate a frying or cooking pan being placed in the pocket portion 9, a handle of the frying or cooking pan can be inserted therethrough. Alternatively, the front 3 and rear 5 panels may be sealed together with a continuous stitch around a full length of the edge portions 7, the handle receiving opening instead being cut and defined in an area on either the front or rear panels.

In one embodiment, a pan receiving opening in the formed pocket is provided for insertion and removal of a frying or cooking pan in the pocket, whereby, in the preferred embodiment, the rear panel 5 which forms the pocket portion 9 is comprised of two overlapping plies of backing fabric 13, 15, which are each connected to the front panel 3 (or the front face fabric of the pan protector). In forming the preferred embodiment of the pan receiving opening of

the cooking pan protector, a first ply of backing fabric 13, which is slightly more than half a total length of the front panel, is firstly connected to the front panel 5 along a substantial length of its edge portions, leaving a transverse length of fabric of the first ply of backing fabric 13 (running across a width of the front panel 5) unsealed. In this embodiment, once sealed in this manner, the first ply of backing fabric 13 thus defines a pocket portion covering slightly more than half a total length of the front panel 5. Then, a second ply of backing fabric 15, which is again slightly more than half a total length of the front panel 5, is connected to the front panel 5 along a substantial length of its edge portions 7, leaving a transverse length of fabric of the second ply of backing fabric 15 (running across a width of the front panel 5) unsealed. In this manner, in this embodiment, the two plies of backing fabric 13, 15 overlap each other about an area which corresponds roughly to the center of the connected front and rear panels, as can be seen with reference to Figure 2, and define the opening 11 to the interior of the pocket portion 9. In fashioning the two overlapping plies 13, 15 of fabric in this manner to form the rear panel 5, a frying or cooking pan can be inserted or removed from the opening 11, and, because the plies of fabric 13, 15 overlap, the pan, when positioned and placed within the pocket portion 9, remains secured and completely covered within the pocket portion 9. Alternatively, the rear panel 5 could comprise a single piece of textile material (which is then connected to the front panel 3) having an opening for receiving a cooking pan defined therein, the opening being in the center, off center, or at an end of the pocket portion. In a further embodiment, a piece of textile material may be connected to the upper surface of an underlying pan protector, the connection being sewn along a substantial length of edge portions of the piece of textile material, so as to define a further pan receiving pocket on the upper surface of the pan protector.

The present invention has been described herein with regard to its preferred embodiment. However, it will be obvious to persons skilled in the art that a number of variations and modifications can be made without departing from the scope of the invention as described herein.